

# Hammerstrom's

for the people  
in the 17th Senate District

# Hotline



State Senator

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**METHAMPHETAMINE PRODUCERS FACING TOUGHER PENALTIES.** The Senate approved legislation that increases fines and penalties for people who participate in the production of methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is a growing concern throughout Michigan with labs being found in such places as barns, garages, motels, apartments, storage areas, and vehicles. The production of methamphetamine can cause serious environmental and safety risks. The toxic waste produced is often dumped in public sewer systems or directly on the ground. The legislation is aimed at stopping the possession and transportation of excessive amounts of methamphetamine ingredients in order to cut off the supply of this highly addictive and dangerous drug.

**DID YOU KNOW?** For every pound of methamphetamine produced, five to six pounds of toxic by-products are created. These by-products can remain in soil and groundwater for years and clean-up costs can range from \$5,000 to \$150,000 depending on the size of the lab.

**CONSUMERS CAN NOW FILE COMPLAINTS ONLINE.** The Bureau of Health Systems (BHS), as required by Public Act 3 of 2003, recently revised its health facility complaint forms and brochures. They are now available online and will also be distributed to nursing homes and other health care facilities for public use. Individuals can now file complaints against nursing homes, hospitals, and other health facilities using the BHS website. The website also has helpful information about the complaint investigation process, as well as advice for choosing a health care facility for loved ones. Anyone wishing to file a complaint with the State of Michigan can go to [www.michigan.gov/bhs](http://www.michigan.gov/bhs) and click on the link for "BHS Health Facility On-Line Complaint Form."

**NEWBORN DROP-OFF.** The Michigan Senate passed Senate Bill 710 this month, extending a sunset provision in the Safe Delivery of Newborns Law. The legislation allows parents to leave their newborn babies at hospitals, fire departments, or police stations without legal reprisal. Public Act 235 of 2000 was passed in response to alarming reports of the rising number of abandoned newborns throughout Michigan, as well as the United States. Before the legislation, it was estimated that ten to 12 babies were abandoned in Michigan each year. In several of those incidents, the children did not survive and parents were never located. Under the law, parents can anonymously surrender their child within a 72-hour timeframe at hospitals or fire and police stations. As long as they follow specific guidelines, parents will not face any criminal abandonment charges. Young parents can reach trained crisis counselors for more information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling toll-free (866) 733-7733.

**DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR MERIT AWARD CERTIFICATION.** Michigan high school graduates who qualify for a Merit Award now have until November 15, 2003 to claim their scholarship. The original deadline of September 15 was extended due to a delay in the release of the state's MEAP results. Those who qualify can certify their award online at [www.MeritAward.state.mi.us](http://www.MeritAward.state.mi.us), or by submitting the certification form by mail or fax. If a student fails to certify by November 15 this year, he/she will not be entitled to use the money until the following academic year. For example, if a student certifies on or after November 16, 2003, he/she will receive payment no sooner than October 2004. Michigan Merit Awards are based on MEAP test results.